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Vaccination trends and perceptions as students return to campus among San José State University Students, Fall 2021

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Vaccination trends and perceptions as students return to campus among San José State University Students, Fall 2021

Research Brief

1 Department of Public Health & Recreation, SJSU

Background

As repopulation of San Jose State University (SJSU) continues this fall, students expressed opinions and concerns about returning to campus in person. To better understand the nature of any concerns, a survey was conducted among California higher education students, with nearly 5,000 respondents. The survey was conducted between June 2021 and August 2021. This brief summarizes the findings from 1,760 self-identified SJSU students.

Enrollment Plans

Among the 1760 SJSU students, 98% were already enrolled for the fall semester, and the remaining 2% were planning to enroll.

Vaccination Status

Students were asked whether they had received the coronavirus vaccine, and which type. Approximately 82% of students reported they were fully vaccinated (Figure 1).

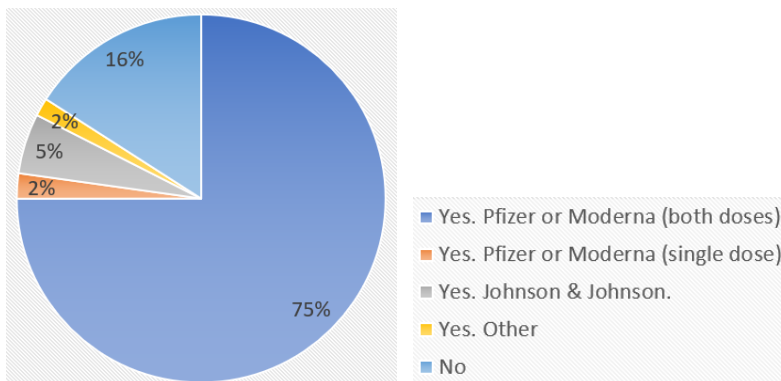


Figure 1. Percent of respondents by vaccination status and type

Key Findings

1. The majority (**82%**) of students were vaccinated prior to the start of the Fall 2021 semester.
2. Concern about **side effects**, the **speed** of development, and **safety** were the most common reasons for not receiving the vaccine.
3. The **majority** of students view vaccines as a key step in getting back to campus safely.
4. Nearly **2 out of 5** unvaccinated students said they were definitely not going to get vaccinated.

Intention to Receive the Vaccine

Students who had not received the vaccine (n = 309) were asked about their plans to receive the vaccine. Among these, 38% said definitely not, and 30% said probably yes (Figure 2).

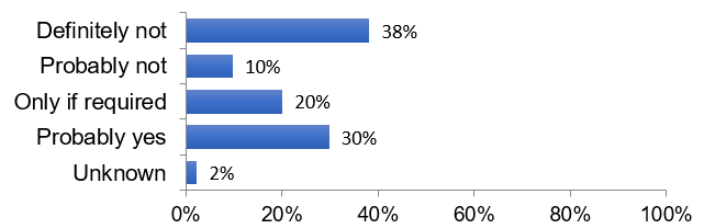


Figure 2. Intention to receive the vaccine among unvaccinated students

Reasons for not receiving the coronavirus vaccine

Among students who had not yet received the vaccine, the most common concern was regarding potential side effects of the vaccine. One in 5 students (20%) believed that the coronavirus was not dangerous, and 18% cited lack of alignment with religious beliefs. About 20% of participants cited 'other' reasons, which included concerns that the vaccine had not received full approval, and that the long-term effects are not known.

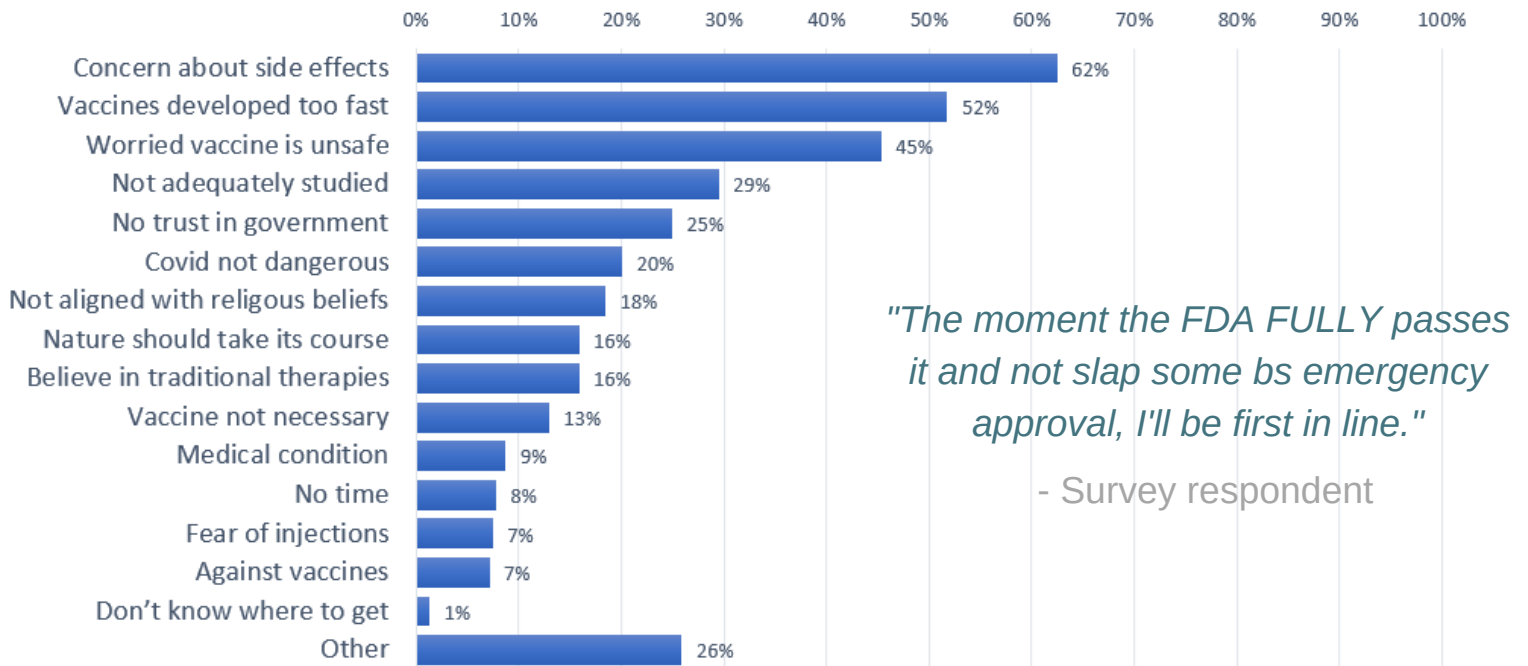


Figure 3. Reasons for not receiving the coronavirus vaccine

Sources of health information

A majority of students (53%) reported that they rely on the Centers for Disease Control or the National Institutes of Health for information on health-related issues. Around 10 - 20% also report relying on social media sources. Very few of them rely on tele-messaging applications such as WhatsApp.

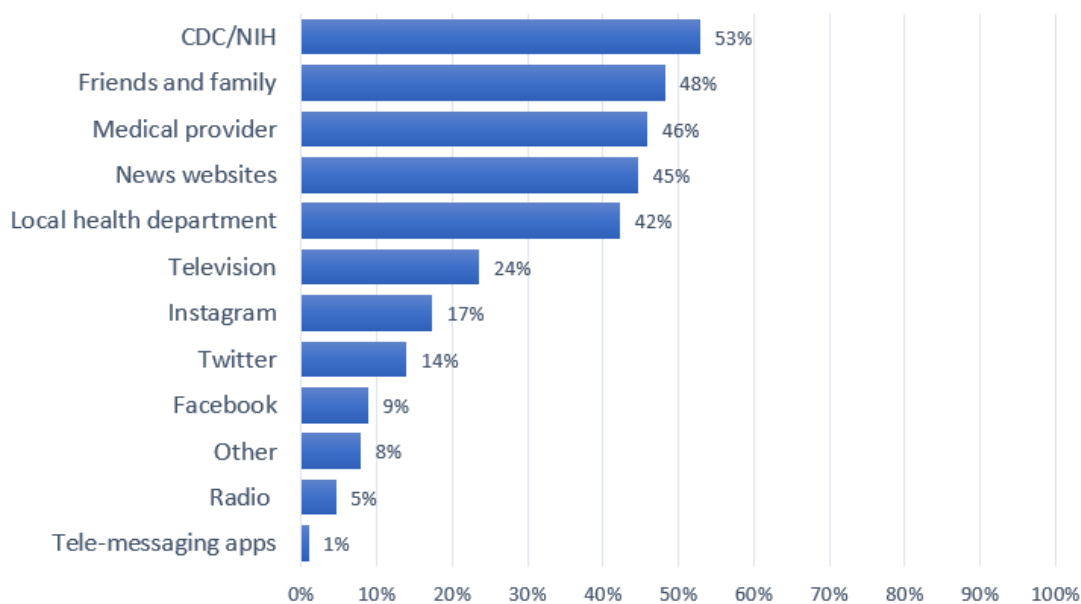


Figure 4. Sources of health information

Vaccinated and unvaccinated students want to maintain mask wearing and social distancing so we can get back to normal.

"**Limit** students in a building and require masks"
 -Fully vaccinated survey respondent

"Reduce number of students in the in-person classes to less than 30. Offer more of the same courses! Offer **online options**."
 - Unvaccinated survey respondent

Social Distancing

Masks

"It is best if everyone still wears a **mask** when they go out."
 - Fully vaccinated survey respondent

"So excited for the social aspect and having things back to **normal**."
 - Unvaccinated survey respondent

Normal

Many vaccinated respondents believed repopulation was happening too fast.

"Put more classes online for spring of 2022. There is **no rush** to get back campus."
 - Fully vaccinated survey respondent

"I am concerned with the spread of the **Delta variant** of COVID-19. I do not believe we should have many in-person classes."
 - Partially vaccinated survey respondent

"I do not want to risk the possibility of someone accidentally giving me COVID. I will need a bit of a **slower transition** back to on-campus."
 - Fully vaccinated survey respondent

Students have a range of beliefs towards mandating COVID-19 Vaccines

"I am not anti-vaxx nor against the vaccine wholeheartedly. I do believe in vaccines, **I just want to feel assured** about the one I am putting into my body through the test of time not through peer pressure and in a rushed nature."
 - Fully vaccinated survey respondent

"I am a strong believer in natural remedies. I take **good care of my health** and do all the suggestions the CDC recommends to help stop the spread. I also get tested weekly. I am hoping I can apply for the exemption"
 - Unvaccinated survey respondent

"I think a policy mandating the vaccine is a **good policy** to have in place. It makes the environment safer for everyone on campus and would make some people feel more comfortable being there."
 - Fully vaccinated survey respondent

Disapprove

Approve

"COVID-19 vaccine **should not be a mandatory** vaccine just like the flu shot or other vaccines. I believe this is an infringement on our rights and conflicts with our beliefs and freedom of choice."
 - Unvaccinated survey respondent

"I understand body autonomy & why people are scared of the vaccine, but if it's like the flu and **other vaccines that are required**, then what's the difference?"
 - Fully vaccinated survey respondent

"If we want to get to the closest thing to normal **we should all get vaccinated**"
 - Fully vaccinated survey respondent

Respondent Characteristics

We conducted an online survey from June 15 to August 30, 2021, using a convenience sample of California college students. Participants were recruited through social media including Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, in addition to via email through on-campus student services providers, mailing lists, and departments. Higher education institution was self-reported. This sample is not fully representative of the San Jose State University students: most respondents were female (60% vs 53% at SJSU), with white students overrepresented (26% of study population vs 18% at SJSU) and Hispanic students underrepresented (12% vs 28% at SJSU). Overall, graduate and undergraduate students were fairly well represented, although some Colleges were underrepresented, such as Business, Engineering, and Social Sciences.

■ Repopulation Study ■ SJSU students

Female



Male



Other/Unknown



Percentage

Race

■ Repopulation Study ■ SJSU Students

American Indian or Alaskan Native



Asian



Black or African American



Hispanic/Latinx



Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders



White



Two or More Races



Non-Resident Alien



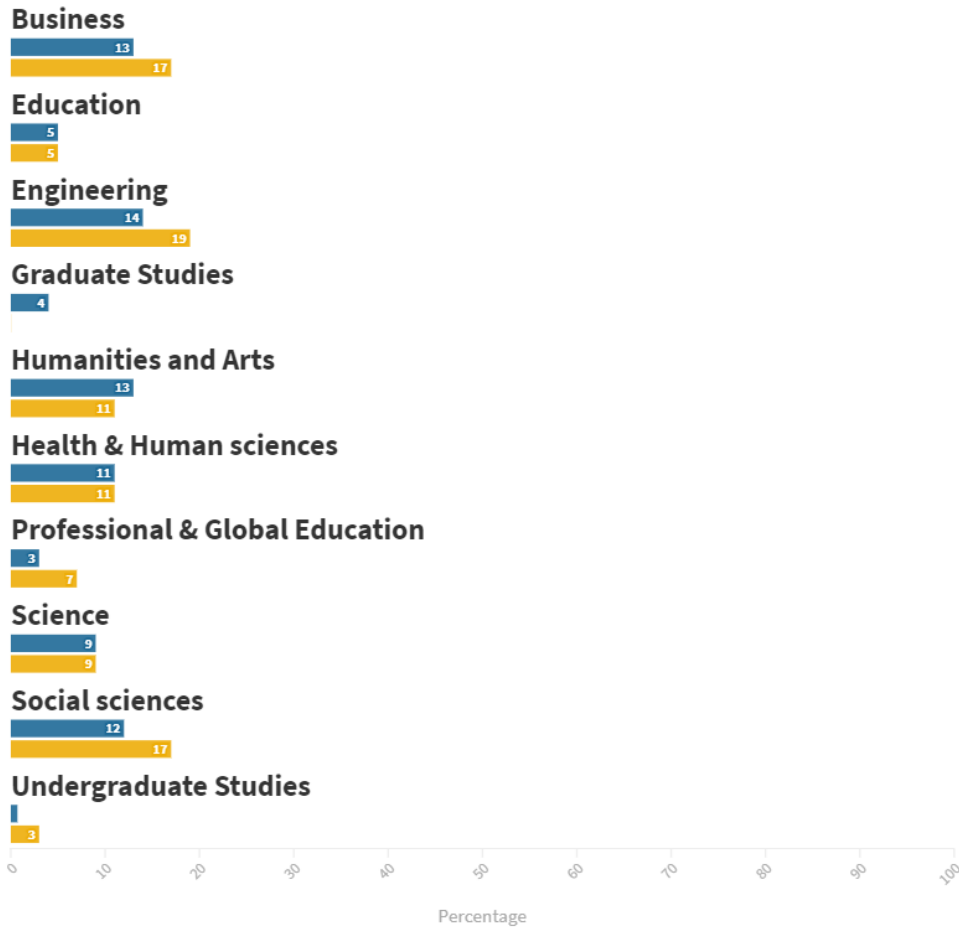
Unknown



Percentage

College Enrollment

■ Repopulation Study ■ SJSU students



Students participation based on education status

■ Repopulation Study ■ SJSU Students

Undergraduate student (e.g. pursuing an Associate's or Bachelor's degree).

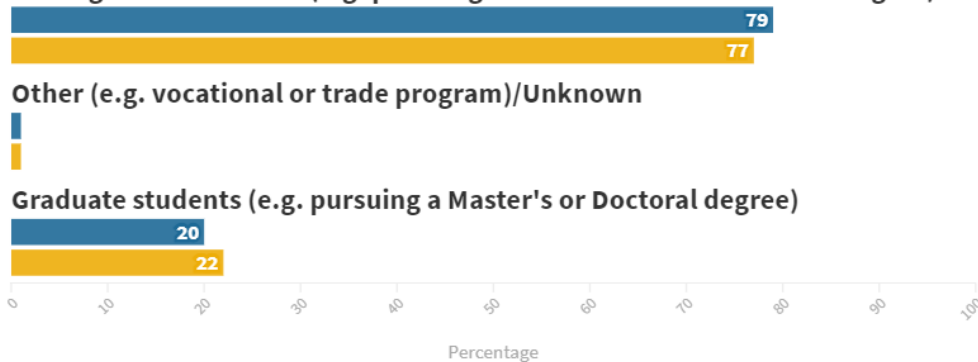


Figure 5. Respondent Characteristics compared to SJSU Student Population

Acknowledgements:

We wish to thank the study participants for completing the survey. Thank you also to our partners at higher education institutions for helping distribute the survey to potential participants.

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